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<b>Media Relations</b>		

## 1. PURPOSE/SCOPE

The purpose of this protocol is to establish policies and procedures for the exchange of information and the coordination of media relations for events in which both the USCG District Thirteen ("USCG") and the Washington State Department of Ecology ("Ecology") Spills Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program are involved.

With the implementation of these policies and procedures, we hope to enhance the effectiveness of our outreach and avoid conflicts that create public confusion. In addition, our combined effort will increase the expertise and resources at our disposal while avoiding undue duplication of effort.

Instructions contained in this protocol apply to sharing information for the purpose of developing timely key messages and news releases for the media as well as talking points for media interviews.

In incidents or events that pose a threat of an oil spill or threat to public health and safety and where Ecology and the USCG are both responding, Ecology and the USCG agree to promptly share information with each other. Media lead will be delegated based on the response/operational lead.

## 2. AUTHORITY/REFERENCES

Applicable May 2001 USCG 13<sup>th</sup> District – State of Washington MOA Section:

### IV. INFORMATION SHARING

- C. *The Parties agree to coordinate media relations for events in which both parties are involved so as to avoid conflicts that create public confusion; otherwise, each will refer the media to the other party for information under that party's purview.*

#### Documents/Forms

Northwest Area Contingency Plan, Section – Area Planning Documentation

- 9610 Public Information Procedures for Spills Incidents

#### ***Ecology***

Statutes

RCW 42.17.250 – 42.17.348, Public Disclosure

#### ***USCG***

Statutes

5 USC Sec. 552, Public Information; Agency Rules, Opinions, Orders, Records, and Proceedings

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Regulations

49 CFR, Part 7, Public Availability of Information

**3. EFFECTIVE DATE/POINTS OF CONTACT**

This protocol will take effect immediately upon approval and signature by both parties.

The following people will serve as points of contact for questions concerning this protocol and its implementation:

**Ecology**

**Northwest Regional Office**

Public Information Officer

Phone: (425) 649-7009

Fax: (425) 649-7098

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Northwest Regional Office,  
3190 – 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.E., Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

**Southwest Regional Office**

Public Information Officer

Phone: (360) 407-6239

Fax: (360) 407-6305

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Southwest Regional Office,  
P.O. Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504-47775

**Central Regional Office**

Public Information Officer

Phone: (509) 575-2610

Fax: (509) 575-2809

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Central Regional Office,  
15 West Yakima Avenue, Suite 200, Yakima, WA 98902-3401

**Eastern Regional Office**

Public Information Officer

Phone: (509) 329-3495

Fax: (509) 329-3529

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Eastern Regional Office,  
4601 North Monroe St., Suite 202, Spokane, WA 99205-1295

**Media Relations**

**Headquarters Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response Program**

Public Information Officer

Phone: (360) 407-7211

Fax: (360) 407-7288

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600

**USCG**

**13th Coast Guard District**

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: (206) 220-7237

Fax: (206) 220-7245

Mailing Address: United States Coast Guard, 13<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District, 915 Second Avenue, Seattle, WA 98174-1067

**MSO Portland**

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: 503-240-9356

Fax: 503-240-9302

Mailing Address: Marine Safety Office/Group Portland, 6767 N Basin Ave., Portland, OR 97217

**MSO Puget Sound**

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: 206-217-6231

Fax: 206-217-6345

Mailing Address: Marine Safety Office, Puget Sound, 1519 Alaskan Way S., Seattle, WA 98134

**4. BACKGROUND POLICIES & PRACTICES**

- A. It is the policy of the operational offices and field units of the USCG and Ecology to promptly share, in real time, information on incidents involving large (300 gross tons and larger) commercial vessels and waterfront oil-handling facilities that pose a threat of an oil spill or threat to public health and safety, to include: vessel or facility fires or explosions, vessel collisions, allisions, groundings, structural failures, or other casualties or deficiencies affecting the propulsion or steering of vessels inbound to, adjacent to, or within the waters of Washington State. Please refer to Protocol 10.

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Information to be shared includes near misses of the above incidents and actions undertaken to mitigate the risk posed by these vessels. Additional examples of incidents/events to be shared also may include: the release of the rescue tug at Neah Bay to assist a vessel; issues related to the discovery of oily-water separator bypass hoses and/or vessels at risk due to extreme weather conditions.

- B. It is the practice of Ecology to refer all such information first to the Public Information Officer (PIO) within the appropriate region (or to the Spills Program PIO as a backup) for release to the media.

It is USCG policy that all such information should be referred to the local unit collateral-duty Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for release to the media. The unit PAO shall inform the district of media interest and release activity.

- C. It is practice of Ecology to refer all media calls/contacts first to the Public Information Officer within the appropriate region (or to the Spills Program PIO as a backup).

It is USCG policy that individual members can speak only about information that they are responsible for. All calls or questions that exceed their professional scope should be referred to the unit PAO or to the District Public Affairs Office.

- D. It is the practice of Ecology that all news releases, advisories, letters to the editor or opinion columns issued by Ecology must be approved by the agency's Communication Director.

It is the policy of the USCG that all news releases, advisories, letters to the editor or opinion columns and other communication items be reviewed and approved by the individual command in authority and/or the district office, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Determination of USCG news release review standards are set forth in the USCG Public Affairs Manual and DHS Public Affairs Management Directives.

- E. Ecology and USCG agree to promptly share news releases (relating to incidents listed in 4-A above) with each other prior to release to the media – for informational purposes, not for approval. USCG news releases will be e-mailed to the Ecology PIO for the region in which the incident occurred; if faxed, the PIO will be alerted via phone call. Ecology news releases will be emailed to [publicaffairs@pacnorwest.uscg.mil](mailto:publicaffairs@pacnorwest.uscg.mil); if faxed, the PAO will be alerted via phone call.

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Media lead will be delegated based on the response/operational lead. Ecology and USCG agree to issue joint media releases, when possible, in situations where both entities share jurisdiction and involvement in the issue, using plain English and Associated Press style.

**5. APPROVAL**



M. S. BOOTHE  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Chief, Marine Safety Division  
By Direction of the District Commander

Date: May 7, 2004



SHERYL HUTCHISON  
Director of Communication & Education  
Washington Department of Ecology

Date: 5/10/04